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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2-19-2007

SPONSOR Anderson LAST UPDATED 2-26-2007 HB 736/aHCPAC/aHAFC

SHORT TITLE Depleted Uranium Training for Veterans SB _____

ANALYST Dearing

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

| Appropriation | | Recurring or Non-Rec | Fund Affected |
|---------------|---------|-------------------------|------------------|
| FY07 | FY08 | | |
| | (\$0.1) | Recurring | General Fund |
| | | | |

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

| | FY07 | FY08 | FY09 | 3 Year Total Cost | Recurring or Non- Rec | Fund Affected |
|--------------|------|----------|----------|----------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Total | | *(\$0.1) | *(\$0.1) | *Indeterminate | Non- Recurring | |

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Relates to House Bill 736, Senate Bill 841

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From

Department of Health (DOH)

Veterans' Services Department (VSD)

Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of HAFC Amendment

The House Appropriations and Finance Committee amends House Bill 736/aHCPAC such that;

- 1.) On page, 3, line 2, strike "training" and insert in lieu thereof "testing".

House Appropriations and Finance Committee amendments changes the bill's text to specify

testing services, instead of training services that will be provided to veterans.

Synopsis of HCPAC Amendment

The House Consumer and Public Affairs Committee amends House Bill 736 such that;

- 1.) On page, 1, line 12, strike “training” and insert in lieu thereof “testing”.

House Consumer and Public Affairs Committee amendments change the short title to specify testing services, instead of training services that will be provided to veterans. It is unknown how the title affects a provision on page 2 lines 22 and 23 that stipulates state funds will not be used to purchase or provide tests or treatment services

Synopsis of Original Bill

House Bill 736 carries no appropriation. House Bill 736 requires the secretary of the Veterans’ Services department and the adjutant general of the department of Military Affairs to assist military veterans who may have been exposed to depleted uranium, or other radioactive isotopes in multiple military campaigns including the Persian region, Iraq, or Afghanistan in receiving federal assistance with their illness.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No fiscal impact from testing as the proposal requires that no state funds shall be used to pay for any screening tests for exposure to depleted uranium or such other federal treatment services.

*There would be an indeterminate level of estimated additional budgetary impact for both the department of Military Affairs due to a provision requiring a report to be compiled, as well as the Veterans’ Services department for any additional work-load involved in their role of providing information on benefits.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

Concerns have been raised that American military personnel have been exposed to depleted uranium from military weapons during the Middle East conflicts in the past two decades. These exposures may have some long-term health effects.

Depleted uranium is widely used in the manufacture of heavy munitions and armor in many of the U.S. military and other western military’s weapons systems. The material is 1.7 times denser than lead, and provides an advantage when competing against more traditional materials. Dusts and particulates from these munitions exist in the air and on the ground in battlefield conditions.

Exposure to aerosolized depleted uranium particulates has been thought to cause acute irreversible damage to kidney function and other organ damage when very high exposure levels occur.¹ There is usually an extended time period between an exposure to radioactive materials and the growth of related cancers, such as leukemia and other types.²

¹Journal of Environmental Radioactivity, *Properties, use and health effects of depleted uranium (DU): a general overview*, 2-5-2002

²Journal of Environmental Radioactivity, *Properties, use and health effects of depleted uranium (DU): a general overview*, 2-5-2002

According to the Department of Health, there is health information on uranium exposure available on multiple websites including the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. However, developing targeted educational outreach, in language understandable by the lay person, would address specific concerns of veterans exposed to depleted uranium.

RELATIONSHIP

House Bill 736 relates to Senate Bill 840. Senate Bill 840 requires the Veterans' Services department to develop and provide health-related information for military veterans who may have been exposed to depleted uranium, or other radioactive isotopes in multiple military campaigns including the Persian region, Iraq, or Afghanistan and complements Senate Bill 841.

The provision in House Bill 736 specifying no state funds be expended on testing conflicts with Senate Bill 841.

Senate Bill 841 appropriates \$200 thousand and seeks to establish a testing protocol, develop and establish a health registry, and contract with appropriate testing laboratories and coordinate affected parties in regard to voluntary testing program for military veterans who may have been exposed to depleted uranium.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

There is a substantial amount of available information regarding this issue in existence. The bill does not clarify whether the Veterans' Services department would be responsible for producing information/ research on the depleted uranium, or whether they would be compiling existing research to distribute to affected veterans.

PD/mt:csd